

Magazine Feature Section

Do Chorus Girls Make Good Wives?



Lady Ashburton Made Her Husband a Brave Soldier.

Ask any chorus girl you know and she will tell you that the dearest, sweetest, most womanly creatures in the world today—the most modest and the most maligned—are to be found in the ranks of musical comedy, and that the man who wins one of these paragons for his bride is favored among all his kind.

But perhaps her words would not be competent evidence on a subject always interesting but brought immediately to the fore just now by the fact that another chorus girl marriage—that of the grandson of the late Marquis of Salisbury, England's famous prime minister—has gone to smash. For Lieutenant Randle William Gascoyne Cecil, eldest son of the Rev. Lord William Cecil (chaplain to King George) and grandson of the great conservative, has just obtained a divorce from Dorothy May Jannaway, an American chorus girl whom he married in June a year ago.

LOVE'S LIGHTS DIMMED.

In his suit the scion of the Cecils named Eric Vigers as co-respondent. At first glance this would seem to indicate that when the course of true love crosses the footlights it is likely to end in the divorce courts. But one swallow does not make a summer. Nor should the action of one chorus girl be permitted to indict an entire species.

The Cecil-Jannaway alliance may have gone to pieces on the rocks of international marriage—that reef where so many American-made duchesses have seen their happiness break up. The incompatibility of race may have been at fault. And yet American chorus girls have married Englishmen and lived happily ever afterward. Frances Belmont, now Lady Ashburton, is one of these. Lady Ashburton began her stage career in the humblest possible way as a member of a chorus of scrub-women. Later on she was one of the famous Floradora sextette, whose members became the toast of New York because of their song, "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden, Are There Any More at Home Like You?"

Lord Ashburton, who is a member of the Baring family of wealthy bankers, is now colonel of the Hampshire Carabiniers "somewhere in France." He led a gallant charge during the fighting on the Yser and is regarded as a splendid officer. His own friends attribute his metamorphosis from a gilded youth about town to one of England's heroes to the influence of his American wife—once a chorus girl.

Another of the notably happy marriages of England is that of Edna May and Oscar Lewisohn. The American girl who took London by storm in "The Belle of New York" began her stage career in the chorus, so her contented married life may be taken as another argument that cho-

Lady Fitzgerald, Formerly May Etheridge, One of the Many Pink Pajama Girls Who Have Caught the Public's Fancy. Lord Fitzgerald's Loyalty to Her Cost Him Dear, But He Has Been Rewarded.

rus girls do indeed make splendid wives.

A DECISIVE ARGUMENT.

But perhaps the best argument of all is to be found in the case of an American multimillionaire who having married one chorus girl lived happily with her until she died, and then took unto himself another bride from the footlights. Of all the men who have married women of the stage Daniel G. Reid, the tinplate king, is surely most competent to testify to the happiness which comes from wedding a chorus girl. Married three times, his second wife was Clariase Agnew, whom old-timers remember as a former toast of Broadway, and his third wife, with whom he is living happily, was before her marriage Florence Worden, a show girl and a shining figure at the Casino during the reign of "Tiff, Taff, Puff."

William Ellis Corey, steel magnate, took for his second wife—and to get her had to divorce the wife of

his struggling youth—Mabelle Gilman, who rose from the humble ranks of musical comedy to be the star of "The Mocking Bird."

William Astor Chandler married Minnie Ashley, one of the most charming and dainty members of the cast of "The Country Girl," an early musical production by Augustin Daly. This marriage of a New York Society man to a musical comedy favorite has proved extraordinarily successful. The Chandlers live in the country all the year round and no longer to return to the footlights as Minnie Ashley has ever troubled the rural serenity of Mrs. William Astor Chandler.

WON KING'S APPROVAL.

In the United States marriages between society and the musical stage are relatively rare. In England they say that while marriages in other countries may be made in heaven in London marriages are made at the Gaiety theater. The education of the English youth of noble family be-

Edna May—Her Alliance to Wealthy Oscar Lewisohn is Perhaps One of Stagedom's Most Famous and It is Also One of the Happiest Marriages on Record.

gins at Eton, takes on a polish at Oxford, but doesn't attain its final degree until he has passed through the green room of George Edwardes' Gaiety theater and passed out again with a Gaiety girl on his arm.

In England they are talking just now of the fact that so many of the war heroes are husbands of Gaiety girls. The case is cited of young Earl Poulett, who when he married Sylvia Storey, who had appeared at the Gaiety as a mermaid, was known even to his friends as a "willie boy." Today the former "willie boy" is a war hero who saved the guns at a critical moment of the battle for the possession of Ypres.

More remarkable even than the cases of Lord Ashburton and Earl Poulett is the transformation of the Marquis of Headfort, husband of Rosie Boote, formerly of the Gaiety. The marquis at the time of his marriage was only 21 years old. He is one of the largest landowners of Ireland, and it is said that in her frantic efforts to prevent his marriage to the humble Miss Boote his aristocratic mother hid his clothes and locked him in his room on the day set for the wedding.

At this time Headfort was an officer in the Life Guards and opposition in army circles was very strongly exerted against his marriage.

Man Who Weds Chorus Girl Social Benefactor, Says Noted Professor.

The marriage of rank to the stage is splendid from the eugenic standpoint. The man who marries the prettiest girl he sees without stopping to think or meditate is the best member of society. Mating should be a matter of impulse. The man who cautiously hunts for a great heiress or a girl of suitable social position is not the man who will do great or heroic deeds.—Professor Warburton Headley of the University of London.



Florence Worden, Third Wife of Daniel G. Reid, the Tinplate King. Miss Worden Was the Toast of Broadway. Now She is the Toast of All Good Wives.

A romance more typical of the white lights which nurtured it was that of Florence Huber to Thomas Manville, son of the asbestos king. This wedding occurred after a first meeting in an all-night restaurant and a courtship of two days. To be sure that he was making Miss Huber really his for keeps young Manville married her in two states. Papa Manville, of course, followed precedent and disinherited his son, and Miss Huber went back to the stage to keep the pot boiling.

TWO DAY COURTSHIP.

But it didn't boil hard enough, and so when Manville, Sr., offered his son an allowance of \$10,000 a year to live apart from his bride and gave the girl herself \$50,000 to sue for a separation the suit was brought. Then the couple pooled their increased finances, fled to Pittsburgh and are living very happily together. It is even told that young Manville has gone to work.

Young Raymond Belmont, son of the New York banker and traction magnate, tried every variety of sport—polo, horse racing, dog breeding, etc.—and he, too, wound up by marrying a chorus girl to whom his father had already paid many thousands of dollars for him. But this marriage did not take. Young Belmont was kidnapped from his bride's arms by his older brother on the very night—or rather the gray dawn of the ceremony. And he has never returned to his weeping mate. Nor has she gone back to the stage, where her career before Belmont met her was both brief and inconspicuous.

Octavio Guinle, a South American millionaire who spends part of his time in New York, was sued for \$50,000 by Monica Borden, a show girl, because he had refused to wed her. Mr. Guinle was arrested on the very day set for the wedding which he sought to evade, and rather than face the action he changed his mind again and married Miss Borden. Mr. Guinle refuses to say whether in his opinion chorus girls make good wives.

FLORADORA GOOD SCHOOL.

Besides Lady Ashburton of Floradora fame other members of the famous sextette who made good matrimonially were Marie Wilson, who married Frederick Gebhard of New York, and as his widow inherited his large estate, and Vaughan Texsmith, who became the bride of one of the wealthiest ranchmen of Texas, her native state.

Edna Goodrich, who came toward the latter end of the long dynasty of wives of Nat Goodwin, was not so fortunate. But what does that prove?

The Floradora girls were show girls. And they made good in domestic life. Yet only a few months ago a New York man, Ignatz Jacobson, interposed to his wife's suit for divorce the following answer:

"My wife is a show girl. She cannot sing, cannot dance, cannot act. She only fills a space. What earthly use is a show girl?"

But Mrs. Jacobson got the divorce. (Copyright, 1915.)

Intoxicating.
"But when she showed me the bonnet which had the claret roses twined around the champagne ribbons, all arranged over a rye base," explains the wife, "and those odd little feathers on it, I succumbed. I wonder what those feathers are?"
"From the quickness with which it got to your head," suggests the husband, "I should say they were socktails."

Marchioness of Headfort—As Rosie Boote She Was One of the Gayest of the Gaiety. Headfort Waged an Uphill Fight for Social Recognition of His Bride—and Won.

war widow in the person of the American show girl Camille Clifford, who introduced the kangaroo walk to London, and who became the wife of Henry Lyndhurst Bruce, son and heir of Lord Aberdeen. For this marriage the future peer's family cut him off. When war broke out he went to the front and was killed leading a charge. It is said that he never regretted giving up his family and social position to wed a show girl.

In this discussion of the chorus girl's qualifications as a wife the affirmative evidence has been presented so far. It seems proper to close the case for the defense with the views of Professor Warburton Headley of the University of London, who said recently:

"The marriage of rank to the stage is splendid from the eugenic standpoint. The man who marries the prettiest girl he sees without stopping to think or meditate is the best member of society. Mating should be a matter of impulse. The man who cautiously hunts for a great heiress or a girl of suitable social position is not the man who will do great or heroic deeds."

THE CHORUS GIRL'S STATUS.

Nevertheless, there are many men who consider that the greatest act of heroism credited to any of these war heroes was that with which each tale commences—his marriage to a chorus girl. These are base cynics who, accepting the dictum that the only good Indian is a dead Indian, proclaim their belief that every good chorus girl is a good Indian.

Of course they do not use the word good in the Victorian sense as synonymous with a woman's reputation. Among such callous brutes a man was found with soul so dead that in replying recently to a chorus girl's suit for breach of promise and damage to her affections he interposed the defense that "a chorus girl has no affections, so they can't be damaged."

He was Sydney Heinlein, a cloak manufacturer of New York, who was sued by pretty Lavinia Mason, then dancing in the Ziegfeld Follies. But that presence in the Follies is no barrier to married bliss is established by the case of winsome May Murray, who married William Schwenker, Jr. Papa Schwenker, who is wealthy, refused his blessing and the disinherited bridegroom was sued for the price of the wedding breakfast at Rector's. For in his joy at being wedded to the girl of his choice he had ordered \$591 worth of food for which he could not pay. Broadway cites this couple as one of its best arguments that chorus girls make good wives.

Mrs. Henry Lyndhurst Bruce, Formerly Camille Clifford, One of the Best Known of American Chorus Girls. The Future Peer's Family Cut Him Off, But He Died a Hero in the Present War.

Hearing of this, the infatuated young man wrote a letter of protest to King Edward in which he said: "I am about to marry Miss Rosie Boote of the Gaiety theater, whom your majesty doubtless knows."

WON DUCHESS' DEVOTION.

Nevertheless, Headfort was compelled to resign from the Life Guards because of his marriage, and he waged an uphill fight for social recognition for his wife until the former Miss Boote met and captivated the Duchess of Westminster, who became her sponsor. The king saw the young marchioness at the races, and he, too, became a victim of her winning charm. So social victory was assured.

Because England needs every officer she can get in these days of war Headfort was recently reinstated in the army. He has raised new regiments at home and is now an officer on the staff of General John French.

Another war hero whose story tends to establish the belief that the man with courage enough to wed a chorus girl possesses bravery on the field of battle as well as in the lists of love is Lord Edward Fitzgerald, a brother of the Duke of Leinster, who at 21 married May Etheridge, one of numerous "pink pajama girls" who have caught London's fancy from time to time.

Angered at what they considered a mesalliance, the Leinster family cut off the young man's allowance and he, like the Marquis of Headfort, was compelled to resign his commission in the army. For a time his young bride was compelled to return to the stage to help support the home.

SCIENCE FAVORS ACTRESS WIVES.

But today Lord Fitzgerald has been restored to his military rank and was recently mentioned in the dispatches for desperate courage in storming a German trench.

The English stage knows not only these war heroes, but it possesses a